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Letter dated 24 February 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted at its 40th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 6 October 2005, and to Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005, under which an International Working Group was created to assist the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of its programme and to consolidate and strengthen existing follow-up mechanisms. The International Working Group held its fourth meeting in Abidjan on 17 February 2006 and issued the attached communiqué (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this communiqué to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Fourth ministerial meeting of the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire

Final communiqué

1. The fourth ministerial level meeting of the International Working Group was held in Abidjan on 17 February 2006, under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Francophonie of the Congo, and Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the United Nations for Côte d'Ivoire. In attendance were Ministers of France, Ghana, Guinea, the Niger, Nigeria and South Africa, as well as the High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, and representatives of the United States of America, Benin, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the African Union, the European Union, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the World Bank.

2. The Prime Minister briefed the Group on the conclusions of the seminar on the road map organized by the Government in Yamoussoukro from 9 to 11 February 2006, as well as measures he intends to take to expedite the effective implementation of the road map, especially with regard to identification and disarmament. The Group congratulates the Prime Minister for taking the initiative to convene the seminar, and for the conclusions reached. The Group salutes the inclusive spirit of the Prime Minister, which encourages dialogue among all the Ivorian political actors. In this context, it also welcomes the cooperation between the President and the Prime Minister.

3. The Group asks all the Ivorian parties to proceed without delay with the disarmament operations and the process of identification of the population.

4. In order to create a social and political climate conducive to facilitating significant progress in the implementation of the road map, the Group exhorts all the parties, especially the media, whose repeated hate messages constitute an obstruction to the peace and reconciliation process, to desist from such acts.

5. The parties should commit themselves to strictly complying with the ban on public demonstrations as stipulated in the presidential decree of 12 December 2005. The parties should also commit themselves to convincing their followers to refrain from inflammatory statements or from any action likely to exacerbate political and social tensions.

6. The Group strongly condemns the recent violence, including against the staff and property of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, notably in the western part of the country. The Group deplores the human losses. The Group reminds the national authorities of their obligation to provide security for persons and their property, in accordance with the international norms and conventions subscribed to by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. In this regard, the Group recalls the Secretary-General's statement of 1 February 2006 and urges the State authorities to ensure strict compliance with the principles governing the activities of

humanitarian agencies with a view to facilitating their return, assistance to and protection of needy populations.

7. The Group reiterates that whoever obstructs the good functioning of the peace and reconciliation process is liable to sanctions by the Security Council.

8. With regard to the National Assembly, the Group recalls the Secretary-General's statement of 29 January 2006, which stresses the need to avoid any unilateral action, and recalls that all parties must strictly adhere to the provisions of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005), while emphasizing the importance of the decisions of the African Union. The Group notes that the Secretary-General intends to remain in touch with the parties concerned in order to achieve the implementation of resolution 1633 (2005) and the decisions of the International Working Group.

9. The Group underlines the imperative to enhance the security of the personnel and equipment of the Radio Télévision ivoirienne in order to ensure its independence and to guarantee unhindered and equitable access by all the Ivorian parties. The Group invites the Prime Minister to take the necessary security measures to allow the Radio Télévision ivoirienne to fulfil its mission.

10. The Group takes note of the extensive consultations carried out by the High Representative for the elections with the signatories to the peace agreements, notably the Pretoria Agreement. The Group endorses the arbitration by the High Representative issued in his communiqué of 16 February, according to which the election of the Bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission is in compliance with the Pretoria Agreement. The Group also endorses the recommendation of the High Representative for the elections to invite the Head of State, the Prime Minister and the political parties to reach, as soon as possible, a political understanding to ensure the effective functioning of the Independent Electoral Commission before the beginning of March.

11. The Group calls on all the Ivorian parties to cooperate closely with the International Working Group with a view to facilitating the peace process and to renounce violence and resort to dialogue and consultation to resolve any disagreement.

12. The Group will hold its next meeting on 17 March 2006 in Côte d'Ivoire.